DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 030 623 SP 002 853

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Project 120.
City Univ. of New York, N.Y. Hunter Coll.
Pub Date 69
Note-7p.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.45
Descriptors-*Field Experience Programs, Inner City, Secondary School Teachers, *Student Teaching, Teacher Evaluation
Identifiers-Project 120

Project 120, 1965 winner of one of the Distinguished Achievement Awards of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, was begun in 1960 to prepare prospective teachers for teaching in inner-city junior high schools. Field trips (planned by a college director of field experiences) into the inner city are provided to acquaint student teachers with the needs and resources of the community; consultations, recruitment, unofficial classroom observation, and advice to student teachers are offered by a college project director; and observation and evaluation of student teachers are provided by a cooperating teacher who serves as a subject-matter supervisor. Two types of peer observation and evaluation, supervised by the project director, are also used: the "cluster approach" in which student teachers observe and evaluate peers who are teaching the same subject matter, and the "total curriculum approach" in which student teachers observe and evaluate peers who are teaching other subject matter areas. (Included are a six-step procedure for peer evaluation and a student teacher-authored short history and evaluation of the project demonstrating its statistical success in increasing teacher persistence in the inner city.) (SM)

ED030623

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Project 120

Professor Bernice Samalonis

Project 120, winner of one of the 1965 Distinguished Achievement Awards of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, was established at Junior High School 120 about eight years ago by the Education Department of Hunter College to encourage education students to prepare for teaching in inner-city junior high schools and to provide student teachers with additional help while they are student teaching in these schools.

The format of the project is a simple one. The Division of Programs in Education assigns two faculty members, both on a part-time basis, to the project. One faculty member, the Director of Field Experiences,[1] plans a series of field trips to acquaint the student teachers with the needs and resources of the community. During the fall semester of 1968, the student teachers visited the Abyssinian Baptist Church to hear Adam Clayton Powell, the Riverside Museum, the offices of Mobilization for Youth, the Harlem Studio Museum, the Metropolitan Museum, the national office of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and the Schomberg Library. During the spring semester of 1969, they visited I.S. 201, P.S. 25 (a school with a bi-lingual program), Youth House, and the Schomberg Library. In the feedback sessions, the student teachers discuss the field trips.

The other faculty member, the Project Director,[2] recruits students for the project, makes "unofficial: observations at the request of the student teacher, and serves as a consultant who visits the student teachers at the school.[3] The Project Director also helps the faculty members of the junior high school by advising them on graduate work, arranging for the use of college facilities and materials to facilitate the work of the teacher in the classroom, and assisting with the ordering of materials, and recruitment of teachers.

To enable student teachers to talk over a problem at the moment it appears to be a crisis, they have the home phone number of both the Director of Field Experiences and the Project Director. For help with human relations problems, student teachers are advised to call the Director of Field Experiences; for problems in teaching techniques, the Project Director.

The student teachers also have a subject matter supervisor who observes and evaluates them.[4]

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1 The current director of field experiences is a sociologist-psychologist who is active in community affairs.

2 Professors Vernon Haubrich and Dorothy Fraser have been Project Directors.

3 Ideally, the Project Director would like to visit the student teachers once each week. The number of visits made each semester depends on the amount of faculty time allotted to the Project, the number of student teachers, and the number of schools used.

4 The Project Director is the subject matter supervisor for student teachers in social studies.

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Participants

The participants are education students who volunteer to do their student teaching in an inner-city junior high school. Before accepting a student teacher for the project, the Project Director reads the cummulative folder on the prospective student teacher and/or has a conference with him.

Often the project student teachers develop a wonderful esprit du corps because they participate in numerous group activities. After the student teaching semester, this group identification continues. When a project student teacher becomes a teacher in one of the project schools, he serves as "big brother" to the new student teachers.

Participating Schools

During the past two years five Manhattan junior high schools (13, 99, 117, 120, and 136) and one Bronx junior high school (118) have participated in the project.

Activities of Project Student Teachers

Student teachers learn to teach by teaching. Generally, they have almost complete responsibility for one class and teach at least one class each day.

Project student teachers participate in numerous other activities at the school besides classroom teaching. How the student teachers use their time at the school depends on the interests of the student teachers and the number of student teachers at the school; so the activities vary from semester to semester.

During the "conference period" with the Project Director, they may

(1) talk with the Project Director about materials, lesson plans, teaching techniques, and other topics pertinent to teachers in urban schools;

(2) visit the library, guidance department, audio-visual center, and the nurses office to find out what services are available to teachers and students;

(3) observe classes in physical education, art, music, auto mechanics, and home economics to study students' involvement in these activities;

(4) visit special education classes to learn about the problems of handicapped students;

(5) learn more about the school's system of records and the importance of these records to students, teachers, and government agencies;

(6) debate the value of teachers' unions with a union organizer;

(7) learn useful Spanish expressions;

(8) consider the speech and reading problems of their students;

(9) confer with deans on discipline;

(10) study the economic, social, and emotional factors affecting the education of their students.

Project student teachers also participate in activities such as directing assembly programs, attending faculty meetings, designing tests, correcting papers, preparing student records, and chaperoning school activities.

They are strongly encouraged to observe and evaluate each other. Student teachers can see each other's strengths and weaknesses and then discuss them without fear their grade is at stake. Such observations have two other advantages: (1) the student teachers develop a team spirit which helps them to provide moral support for each other, and (2) the student teachers develop effective channels for the cross-fertilization of ideas. It is hoped that by becoming accustomed to peer observation and evaluation during student teaching, they will be more willing to seek help and to give help to their peers when they are teachers.

In Project 120 two types of peer observation and evaluation have been used: the "cluster approach" and the "total-curriculum apporach." In the "cluster approach" two to four student teachers in one subject matter area such as English or social studies are assigned to one school. They form a team for peer observation and evaluation. Because they are working in the same area, during the observations and follow-up discussions, they can become aware not only of their deficiencies in technique but also of their deficiencies in content.

The team members also participate in the "total-curriculum approach;" that is, they observe student teachers in other subject matter areas. For example, the student teacher in social studies can learn how the mathematics teacher gives the assignment, maintains discipline, or paces the lesson. He can also learn how he as a teacher of social studies can expedite or enhance a student's learning in another area. The "total-curriculum approach" can also be used when the school has a number of student teachers but only one student teacher in a subject matter area.

Some student teachers felt the following six-step procedure involving peer observation and evaluation was helpful for the improvement of teaching.

(1) The Project Director observes Student Teacher A teach a lesson.

(2) The Project Director and the Student Teacher discuss the lesson.

(3) The Project Director and Student Teacher A observe Student Teacher B teach the same lesson to another but similar class.

(4) The Project Director, Student Teacher A, and Student Teacher B discuss the lesson.

(5) Student Teacher A teaches the same lesson to another but similar class.

(6) The Project Director and Student Teacher A compare the lesson taught in Step 1 with the lesson in Step 5.

Generally, the student teacher shows great improvement when teaching the lesson in step five. This procedure is not possible, however, unless the school has numerous classes in the same subject and unless the teachers teaching the course are at about the same place in the course of study.

In addition to observing each other, project student teachers are encouraged to correlate their teaching. Both the junior high school students and the student teachers benefit when, for example, the student teacher in social studies introduces his students to the culture of the Russian people and then the student teacher in physical education teaches these student some Russian folk dances.

Because schools vary in their atmosphere and procedures, the student teachers, in addition to learning about the school to which they are assigned, also visit other schools in the project. On these visits they have the opportunity to see their counterparts teach in a different school situation and to discuss the lessons they observed with the student teachers who taught them.

This semester some new activities are being stressed. The student teachers are actively participating in professional organizations, having videotapes made of their observations so they can see themselves as others see them, and taking their students to the college to introduce them to college activities and to inform them about admission requirements.

Evaluation

When asked how they would improve the student teaching situation, the student teachers frequently made these recommendations:

1. have all-day student teaching so that one can concentrate on student teaching instead of dividing his efforts between student teaching and numerous college courses.

2. provide more realistic preparation in the methods courses.

3. provide more laboratory experiences prior to student teaching.

Report prepared by a student teacher.

Project 120 was begun in 1960 by Professor Vernon Haubrich[1] (formerly) of Hunter College. It's stated purpose was to try, in some measure, to stem the annual flight of the new teacher from the slum or special service school. The obvious reasons for this extraordinary annual exodus was the disappointment and discouragement felt by the new teacher who was not at all prepared for the "challenge" of the slum school, and more often than not could not meet it. Project 120 proposed to correct this situation by giving the potential slum teacher six months of intensive student teacher training within a special service school and its environs. The first school chosen for the experiment and for which it was named was Junior High School 120 at Madison Avenue and 120 Street in Manhattan.

The first research on the success of this project was done by its founder two years after the program's inception. Its purpose was to determine the number of Project student teachers who actually entered into teaching in their special service school. Professor Haubrich's statistics indicated that 75% of the 32 volunteers (all Project 120 members have been volunteers) had chosen to teach in the schools in which they have been trained.

The latest research[2] attempts to measure the success of the Project statistically through a numberical count of the number of Project graduates who have remained in their special service schools (as of June 1966) and a numerical comparison of Project to non-Project graduate turnover in the personnel of Jr. H.S. 120 (as of December 1966).

1 Professor H. Schueler, Chairman of the Education Department, was also instrumental in establishing the Project.

2 Currently the results of a follow-up study are being tabulated.

The former research is based on a questionnaire survey sent out in June 1966 by Professor Dorothy Fraser of Project 120, Hunter College. Of the 109 Project graduates, 52 responded and limited information was available for an additional 12. Of these 64, 30 or 46% (of these 3 were on NDEA leave of absence for one year) were presently teaching at the school where they were trained. At least 4 others (though the number may be as high as 7, because the special service statuses of their schools, if any, could not be adequately determined) were teaching in similar type JR.H.S.'s, 1 other in a similar type High School and 1 other in a similar type Public School. The total percentage of Project gradutes who remained in the field of the special service school is therefore at least 56%.

The fate of these 28 graduates who did not choose to remain in the special service field is of equal interest and importance. 4 have moved on to the High School, 3 are teaching in other areas of the United States and 3 are working in related fields with similar type children. Of the remaining 18, only 5 (the number may be as low as 2 because of the inability to determine the status of the school) have actually transferred to other types of Jr. H.S.'s. The remainder are for the most part completing their higher education or are retired as housewives.

The research done at JR.H.S. 120 consisted of a numerical count and comparison of the number of* substitute teachers (working on a permanent yearly basis) divided into Project and non-Project graduates who had entered the school in any year since 1960 and were as of December 1966 still teaching there. The status of substitute was determined at date of entry, many of these are now regular teachers. Of the 88 non-Project teachers who have worked

* All would then be volunteers, and free to transfer when desired.

at Jr. H.S. 120 since 1960, 22 were still teaching there as of December 1966. The percentage of turnover among this group since 1960 (six years) has therefore been 75%. Of the 30 Project graduates who actually began teaching at Jr. H.S. 120, 20 were still teaching there as of December 1966. The percentage of turnover among this group since 1960 has therefore been 34%. It is the conclusion of the researcher that the 39% discrepany in rate of turnover can only be accounted for by the training received under Project 120.